

Education Committee,

My name is Mary Dietz and I am a bachelor's level Social Work student working with the homeless population in Waterbury. I am testifying in favor of raised senate bill No. 112 concerning the availability, affordability, and quality of childcare services for families with a parent enrolled in approved higher education. I am an intern at Home of Hope, a transitional home that houses families with children to support them as they work towards independent living and self-sustainability with the help of our faith based program.

As a staff member observing this unique multifaceted program in action, we provide extensive support for the families but gaining full time employment to support a family without a degree or training can be difficult and leaves the residents in a perpetuating cycle of poverty. According to the National Coalition for the Homeless, 41% of the homeless population is comprised of families; the decline in wages and changes in welfare programs account for increasing poverty among families, and in every state, more than minimum wage is required to afford a one or two bedroom apartment (2009)<sup>1</sup>. Based on this information, the odds are already stacked against a homeless single parent supporting a family.

In my experience working with this population, I have witnessed a mother enrolled in higher education unable to afford childcare for her young child and had to rely on parents and staff in the transitional home for assistance. However, this case is not representative of remaining homeless parents who cannot attend higher education because of the barriers presented regarding attaining affordable and accessible childcare services. Offering this service to parents with young children can add the incentive of enrolling in high education to further a career or training to achieve self-sustainability.

This passing of this bill can change the lives of families that are currently struggling day to day to find adequate employment to support a family, while managing the needs of children. Please vote this bill favorably out of committee to positively impact the lives of parents and their families.

Thank you for your consideration,

Mary Dietz

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<sup>1</sup> National Coalition for the Homeless. (2009, July). Homeless families with children. Retrieved from [www.nationalhomeless.org/factsheets/families.html](http://www.nationalhomeless.org/factsheets/families.html)